



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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## Speaker Biographies

### Brenda Dann-Messier, Assistant Secretary

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)

Brenda Dann-Messier was nominated by President Obama as assistant secretary for vocational and adult education on July 14, 2009. On Oct. 5, 2009 she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and began her official duties on Oct. 13, 2009.

As the first assistant secretary for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) who is also an adult educator, Dann-Messier leads the Department's efforts in adult education and career and technical education, as well as efforts supporting community colleges and correctional education. She oversees the administration of 11 grant programs in these areas, totaling approximately \$1.9 billion annually. Dann-Messier is committed to collaboration, both within the Department and across federal agencies, including working with the U.S. Departments of Labor, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Commerce.

OVAE's vision is for all youths and adults to have multiple opportunities to obtain lifelong education and training in order to achieve rewarding careers and family lives, participate in their communities, and attain their personal goals. OVAE is devoted to equipping youths and adults with the literacy, numeracy, language and technical skills and the training necessary for success in the 21st-century global economy, by expanding capacity, improving quality, and increasing accountability through innovation and collaboration.

From 1993 to 1996, Dann-Messier worked for the Clinton administration under Secretary Richard Riley, serving as the secretary's regional representative for Region I, which includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Prior to returning to the Department, Dann-Messier served for a decade as president of the Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center, a community-based adult education agency based in Providence, R.I. Under her leadership, Dorcas Place expanded to serve more than

1,000 adults statewide through a range of programs, including day and evening adult basic education, adult secondary education, English for speakers of other languages, and GED classes. Dorcas Place also offers English literacy and civics, and financial literacy education, family literacy, college preparatory programs, and sector-based workforce education and job training programs linked with employers and industry, including sector-based career academies.

She also established the Developmental Education Institute for reading and math, in collaboration with the Community College of Rhode Island.

Dorcas Place was one of only ten sites in the nation to receive a five-year, federal Full Service Community Schools grant to establish school-based family literacy and support services at five inner city elementary schools in Providence, RI. That same year the agency opened the Rhode Island Welcome Back Center, one of only seven programs in the nation to help foreign-trained health professionals enter the health care workforce.

Dann-Messier earned her B.A. in history and secondary education, plus a teaching certificate, at Rhode Island College, and went on to complete her master's in instructional technology with another certificate in adult basic education. Dann-Messier received her Ed. D. in educational leadership, with a dissertation analyzing access to higher education for welfare recipients, from Johnson and Wales University.

The daughter of immigrants seeking new opportunities in America, Brenda Dann was born in West Orange, N.J., to a German father and an Italian mother. At age 6 months, she moved with her family to Warwick, R.I., where she grew up. The assistant secretary and her husband, Daniel Messier, a retired middle-school science teacher, reside in Washington, D.C. They have two sons—Dana, an airline pilot with Delta Airlines who lives in St. Louis, Mo., with his wife and daughter, Anna, and Curtis, an assistant teacher who is working on a master's in elementary education at Hunter College in New York City.

## Sharon Lee Miller, Director

U.S. Department of Education, OVAE, DATE

Dr. Miller serves as Director of the Division of Academic and Technical Education (DATE) within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education. DATE is responsible for administering one of the Department's largest formula grant programs, which currently distributes about \$1.2 billion annually to states under the newly-reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV). The division also administers discretionary grants to improve the quality of career and technical education for Native Americans, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians; gathers data for national

accountability and for state and local program improvement; and conducts national initiatives that improve the rigor and relevance of career and technical education programs.

A native of Schenectady, New York, Sharon holds a Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Practice from the University at Albany in New York State. Her OVAE work experience includes oversight of research, development, and evaluation studies on issues pertaining to career and technical education. Prior to coming to the Department, she worked for the New York State Education Department with State staff responsible for administering career and technical education grants to local education agencies, conducting statewide evaluations, and gathering performance accountability data. She has formerly taught at the both the Kindergarten and college level.

### Andrew Johnson, Grants Management Specialist

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Andrew Johnson is a Program Specialist at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) in Washington, DC. His major responsibility is to assist in the implementation and administration of the Carl Perkins grant. Specific assignments include identification of policy issues related to the Perkins grant, membership of the Perkins grant monitoring team as a fiscal lead, and the review of budget and financial reports. Andrew earned a B.A. in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland and an M.P.M. (Masters in Policy Management) from Georgetown University.

### Len Lintner, Senior Education Program Specialist

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Len Lintner is a program officer in the State Administration and Accountability Group in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at the United States Department of Education. He has been with the Department and vocational education since 1978, working in the areas of financial management, audits, local planning, and monitoring. Prior to coming to the Department, he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Afghanistan, and taught history of religion at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin.

Len earned a B.A. in International Studies at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio; an M.Div. from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey; an M.A. in South Asian Studies, an ABD in Indian Religion at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin; and a J.D. at the New England School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts.

## John Miller, Audit Liaison Officer

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John Miller is the Audit Liaison Officer (ALO) for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education. A Federal employee since 1986, John joined the Department in 1989 as an audit resolution specialist with the Office of Postsecondary Education's Financial Aid Office. He was a part of the organization's transformation as financial aid separated from OPE to become the Office of Federal Student Assistance. He had further input as the office was transformed into one of the Federal government's first performance-based organizations.

A native of Alton, Illinois, John holds a B.A. in History and Social Science from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, an M. Th. in Moral Theology and an M.A. in History from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland. John became the Office of Vocational and Adult Education's ALO in January of 2009.

## Edward R. Smith, Chief

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Program Administration Branch  
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Dr. Smith serves as Chief of the Program Administration Branch, within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education. He administers approximately \$1.2 billion of both discretionary (i.e., Native Americans, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians) and formula grants authorized under Title I of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and Title II (i.e., Tech Prep) to all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to improve the academic achievement of secondary and postsecondary outcomes of career and technical education students.

A native of East St. Louis, IL, Edward holds a Rh. D. (Doctor of Rehabilitation degree) from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; a Master of Science degree in Urban Affairs &

Policy Analysis, from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville; and a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from Illinois State University where he was an Academic All-American Football Team linebacker. He attended law school at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, School of Law, and the University of Iowa College of Law. Prior to coming to OVAE, Edward served as an Educational Program Specialist with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education. During his tenure at RSA he administered several national discretionary grant programs designed to increase the supply of rehabilitation personnel and improve the skills and competencies of professionals employed at state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

His professional experiences also include leadership positions in both public and private non-profit child welfare and child-caring organizations. He has held planning and policy positions in local, county, and state government. Edward has also spent a significant part of his career in the classroom teaching vocational rehabilitation counseling undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.

### The mailing address for VFMI presenters is:

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